BOOK REVIEW

James L. Castner. 2004. **Photographic Atlas of Botany and Guide to Plant Identification.** (ISBN 0-9625150-0-0, spiral pbk.). Feline Press, P.O. Box 357219, Gainesville, FL 32635, U.S.A. (**Orders:** Feline Press, P.O. Box 357219, Gainesville, FL 32635, U.S.A.; jlcastner@aol.com). $40.00, 310 pp., color photographs, glossary, index, 8 1/2" × 11".

It has been said that a picture is worth a thousand words—this is very true for Castner's Photographic Atlas of Botany. Castner's book is a great resource for both beginners and professionals in the plant sciences field. The author presents the reader with plant anatomy and taxonomic traits in hundreds of precise color photographs. This is the book I wish I had had on my shelf when I started taking lab-based plant courses.

The author begins with an approximately 50 page pictorial guide to plant anatomy, roots, stems, leaves, flower structures, and fruit types. Castner includes photographs of live plants and microscopic anatomy of items such as roots stems and leaves. Included in the plant anatomy sections are images of leaf scars, specialized root/stem structures, leaf arrangement, leaf apices, leaf margins, flower structures, and flower anatomy as well as images of the different types of simple, multiple and aggregate fruits. The photographs presented include many cross and longitudinal sections among the various examples of each area of anatomy. For example, placentation types are shown in cross sections and multiple images of flower nectaries are provided. These perfectly composed photographs are unmistakable as to what they are depicting, thus providing a valuable resource to those learning plant anatomies or learning to use a flora key.

The majority of the book is devoted to plant taxonomy and shows photographs of the various plant families within the seedless vascular plants through the angiosperms. Each family section begins with traits given for each distinct family, as well as terminology that may be necessary to know while looking at the photographs associated with that family. The color photographs and labels within the photographs are crisp and clear, making traits easy to spot. Castner has collected a good diversity of photographs for the different families and subfamilies for the reader to view. The book finishes with a comprehensive glossary and helpful references.

James Castner's book *A Photographic Atlas of Botany and Guide to Plant Identification* is strongly recommended for those learning plant anatomy and taxonomy. This would make a wonderful reference text for botanical-based college courses. The book is organized by cladistic relationships between families which may frustrate some users, a "by family" index is included for those unfamiliar with such organization. This book is also a very reasonably priced, given the number and quality of the color photographs. These images make the task of learning plant anatomy and taxonomy easier because the photographs show the reader exactly what is being described. It can't be said enough that this photographic atlas is a fantastic resource for both beginners and professionals in the plant sciences. In fact, I recently purchased my own copy!—*Lee Luckeydoo, Herbarium, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, 509 Pecan Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102-4060, U.S.A.*